

William P. Gansfield, Director

Release (X) Excise () Deny

Exempt () In Part () In Full

Classify as C () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date 5/16/81 Declassify on

Reason OE
25X1

UNCLASSIFIED 9/7/78

Mr. Schneider

SHCM-1A

WEEKLY H

Reports

INR WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS

No. 72, September 7, 1978

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NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

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Argentina

Possible Right-of-Option Obstacle.

[] does not believe that the government's right-of-option program will allow a significant number of state-of-siege (PEN) prisoners to leave Argentina, according to Embassy Buenos Aires. Under the program, PEN prisoners with a willing host country can petition for exile. However, [] claims that: B1

--at least half of the roughly 3,400 PEN detainees have "cases" pending against them and, therefore, are not eligible for right-of-option release;

--embassies of most prospective host countries are having difficulty gaining access to prisoners in order to conduct screening interviews; and

--the pace of releases is slow even for prisoners with certificates of acceptance from host countries.

The [] source believes that more PEN prisoners eventually will be released or placed under house arrest than granted the option of exile. [] Buenos Aires 6865, September 1)

INR Comment. If the [] source's reference to "cases" pending against prisoners means that charges have actually been filed against them, this is a situation of which we were unaware. We had believed that criminal charges were not, and perhaps legally could not, be filed until the prisoner was removed from the PEN list. If charges have been filed, the relative importance of the right-of-option program as a prisoner release mechanism declines because the burden would then shift to a court system that has not functioned expeditiously in security cases.

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